

# Pondera County



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*Many horticulture questions are fielded through the Pondera County MSU Extension office, by Wendy Wedum.*

**P**ondera County is located in the heart of the Golden Triangle, famous for quality wheat and barley production. The county contains 1,625 square miles and is very rural with approximately 6,400 residents in the communities of Conrad, Valier, Dupuyer, Brady, and Heart Butte.

There are approximately 950,000 acres in farms in Pondera County, comprised of pasture land, dry land, and irrigated. Crops grown in the county include wheat, barley, pulses, oilseeds, and hay. Beef cattle and sheep are also important agricultural products raised in the county.

Health facilities and retirement homes also are important economic contributors in Pondera County. The Pondera Medical Center is very modern and serves a multi-county area with an economic impact of over \$12 million.

Check out our Pondera County MSU Extension Facebook page to see what we're up to. <https://www.facebook.com/ponderaextension/>

## 4-H Goes Viral

With the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, in-person activities were cancelled. MSU Extension Pondera County created daily Facebook Live videos to keep youth engaged. The focus of the videos was 4-H, although all youth were welcome

to watch. A total of 30 educational videos were made over 6 weeks, with topics ranging from animal anatomy to soil health. Twelve MSU Extension Agents from across the state helped make videos to engage youth, as did Miss Rodeo Montana and three current 4-H members. Altogether, the live videos had over 11,000 views, and most included more than one person watching. The Facebook videos were viewed across Montana, in seven other U.S. states and three Canadian provinces.

The video series encouraged viewers to explore new projects in 4-H, join 4-H, learn more about healthy eating and food production, and do things to benefit their mental health during the pandemic. Overall, viewers rated the video series as excellent and comments were overwhelmingly positive.

## Harnessing Social Media For Extension Education

MSU Extension Pondera County took advantage of the power of social media for Extension education in 2020, when over 223 million Americans used at least one social network site. This number includes 90% of 18-29-year-olds and 82% of 30-49-year-olds. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have more users than other popular social media sites, so these

are the platforms where MSU Extension Pondera County decided to increase our presence. Using social media for Extension education has become an effective tool to reach clientele without requiring traditional face-to-face meetings or programs. By posting non-biased, research-based information on social media platforms, we have reached thousands of people.

**Posts on our social media accounts include, but are not limited to:**

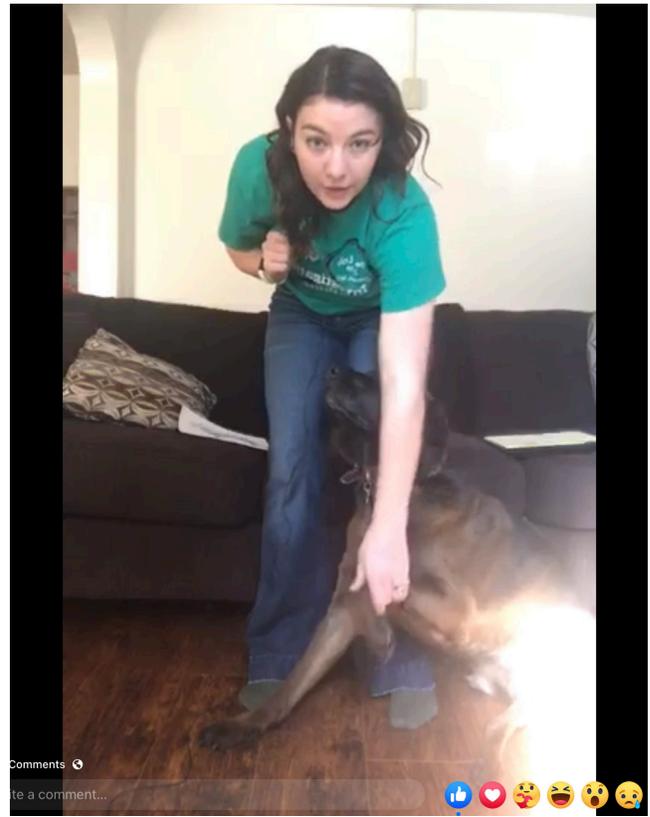
- MontGuide Mondays on Facebook and Instagram, highlighting available MontGuides.
- #DidYouKnowFridays on Facebook and Instagram, where we share services offered by MSU Extension.
- Kids cooking tips on Facebook and Instagram.
- 4-H project learning activities on Facebook Live and YouTube.
- Recorded webinars on YouTube.
- Food Fact Fridays on TikTok and Instagram, a series where we share facts about Montana-grown food.
- Gardening Tips on TikTok.

Our posts on Facebook reach the largest audience, averaging 3,500 people and growing. On Instagram, 150 users follow us, and our video posts regularly receive over 1,000 views. On TikTok, we have 85 followers and videos are viewed an average of 250 times, with some receiving up to 1,800 views. The YouTube following is smaller with an average of 40 views per video. Many of the Extension posts are shared by other social media users which increases their reach. We frequently receive positive comments from people discovering MontGuides or services Extension offers, or from people learning new things about gardening, healthy eating, 4-H projects, and agriculture. Using social media for MSU Extension education has allowed us to expand our impact in Pondera County, across the state, and beyond.

**Food, Money and Safety Impacts**

**Family & Consumer Science Impacts in Pondera County occurred in person, office, electronically and by phone including:**

- Seven food service industry employees successfully passed the Food Managers certification test.
- Four people learned safe methods to cut and slice produce, and how piece size affects cooking outcomes.
- Four people learned how to reduce recipe sizes and methods to cook for 1-2 people.
- Eleven people learned how to make small batches of fermented sauerkraut in the Master Food Preservation class





Pondera Co Extension ▾



@pondera\_ext

24

Following

84

Followers

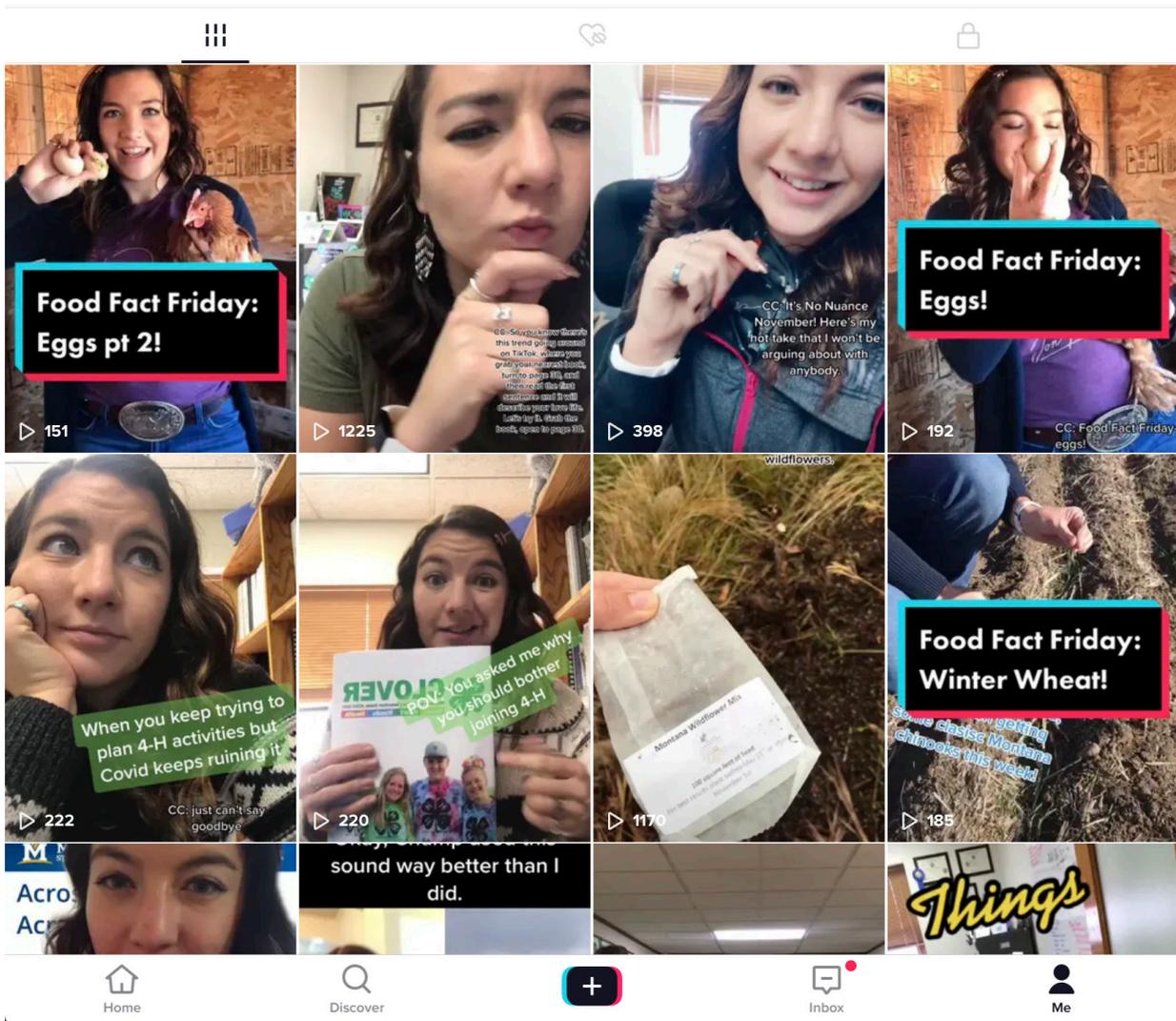
891

Likes

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MSU ExtensionPondera County - research based, non-biased information for Montana



**Previous Page: (top)** Extension dog, Gilly, acts as a model for Adriane Good to demonstrate dog anatomy during a 4-H Facebook Live Video, by Adriane Good; **(bottom)** Example of making small batches of fermented sauerkraut in canning jars, by Wendy Wedum; **This Page:** Pondera County MSU Extension's TikTok page, by Adriane Good

and one community member learned how to correctly make sauerkraut using research-based recipes for food safety.

- Answered many home canning questions and prevented the potential for food spoilage and contamination.
- Co-authored seventeen press releases on estate planning and financial issues with MSU Extension Family Economics Specialist Marsha Goetting, PhD.
- Reviewed one MontGuide (Vermiculite insulation), Co-authored one MontGuide (Estate planning for minor children) with Marsha Goetting, PhD and Carrie Krug, Richland County Extension Agent.
- Assisted 12 people with information on estate planning and homestead declarations which included a call from a lawyer in Virginia wanting to use MSU Extension's MontGuides. We receive regular estate planning referrals from a local bank.
- Fifteen people learned about the importance of keeping food safe during holiday meals and buffets. Five individuals shared they will purchase or use a food thermometer more and seven individuals learned and will share information about the length of time food can be left out at room temperature.

## Pondera County Staff



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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